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Viewing cable 09BUENOSAIRE295, ARGENTINE GENDARMERIE COMMANDING GENERAL WELCOMES

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09BUENOSAIRE295	2009-03-16 21:38	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Buenos Aires

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1362537-la-ficcion-de-los-carteles-extranjeros>

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 000295

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/16/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [KTIP](#) [ASEC](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE GENDARMERIE COMMANDING GENERAL WELCOMES
ENHANCED COLLABORATION WITH USG

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for

reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Argentine Gendarmeria (Border Patrol)

Commanding General Hector Schenone called on the Ambassador March 4 at his request to introduce a new staff officer and to review cooperation with the USG on key issues. Schenone described the Gendarmeria's efforts to address increasing pressure from drug traffickers and to enhance the Gendarmeria's capacity to fight international crime. He shared his interest in obtaining a number of military transport helicopters to assist GOA efforts to interdict drug traffickers in remote northern parts of the country and requested USG help in establishing an inter-agency counter-drug training center outside Buenos Aires and/or supporting construction of a permanent home for the Northern Border Task Force (NBTF) in Salta. Ambassador described USG interest in supporting regional efforts to improve public security and commended the Gendarmeria for recent actions against drug and human trafficking. End Summary.

12. (U) Long-serving Gendarmeria Commanding General Hector Bernabe Schenone called March 4 on the Ambassador, ostensibly to introduce Principal Commander Claudio Larraburu, whom Schenone has entrusted with managing relations with the U.S. Embassy in counter drug affairs. Ambassador was accompanied by Military Group Commander, DEA Special Agent, and Pol-Mil Officer (notetaker).

13. (U) Ambassador voiced appreciation for recent successful operations by the Gendarmeria against drug traffickers and trafficking in persons (TIP) and noted the deep and successful training relationship between the DEA and Embassy Military Group and Gendarmeria counterparts. The Ambassador observed that public security is a sub-theme at the upcoming Summit of the Americas and an issue that the USG perceives as important for the region. He described the Merida Initiative with Mexico and underscored our recognition that countries in the region needed assistance in responding to drug trafficking and other manifestations of international crime.

14. (U) The Ambassador also noted that, although Argentina's challenges on its northern and eastern borders were of a different nature and scale than those faced by Mexico, some aspects were similar, particularly the need for regional cooperation and coordination. In that regard, the Ambassador shared our appreciation that the Gendarmeria's sister law enforcement agency, the Federal Police (PFA), had agreed to take over from Bolivia management of the regional Centers for Drug Information (CDI) network, supported by DEA. Ambassador mentioned an April 27-May 1 conference in Salta on the CDI and encouraged the Gendarmeria to be represented. (Note: the conference is supported by DEA and State INCLE funds.)

Request for Helos, a Building in Salta, and Training

15. (C) Schenone thanked the Ambassador for his recognition of the Gendarmeria's work and of the challenges Argentina faced.

He said his forces had seized over 800 kilos of cocaine in February alone; Argentina clearly was facing new pressure by traffickers operating through Bolivia. He noted that the Gendarmeria continued to have two officers present in La Paz and that on the professional level the organization was still working well with Bolivian counterparts. Still, Schenone said that Argentina considered Bolivia a cocaine producing country, not just a trafficking country as the Government there would contend.

16. (SBU) General Schenone said that the U.S. "military" training received by the Gendarmeria was highly valuable to the missions it was performing and included in this recent visits by Gendarmeria officers to the Jungle Training Course in Colombia. He said that his civilian boss, Minister of Justice and Security Anibal Fernandez, was fully supportive of enhanced collaboration with the USG.

17. (C) Schenone added that the Gendarmeria perceived a strong need to obtain air mobility in its fight against drug

traffickers crossing the northern frontiers from Bolivia and Paraguay and landing at remote sites in Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero, and Chaco provinces. He had in mind Bell UH1Hs, which would give his forces the capacity to put men on the ground at landing sites detected by radar or fixed wing aircraft. He said that Minister Fernandez fully supported the proposal (without going into details about a procurement process or funding). Schenone said his forces had six Eurocopters (Cougar) (and several smaller "'Pumas'") but not the versatility and capacity that Hueys could provide.

18. (C) Schenone said that the Eastern Border Task Force (EBTF) in Misiones Province needed a new effort by the government to ramp up its program and interdiction efforts. He also described a need to build a dedicated counter-drug trafficking training center outside of Buenos Aires. He said that U.S. support for such an effort would be welcomed. In addition, he said, the Gendarmeria had land available in Salta that could support a permanent GOA-owned headquarters for the Northern Border Task Force (NBTF) if the USG could provide assistance.

19. (SBU) Comment: Hueys would give the Gendarmeria an ability it does not presently have to insert itself on the ground more quickly at remote, clandestine landing strips. Given the complex coordination (and additional radar coverage) needed to make such operations successful, this capacity might have limited real benefits, but it would change somewhat the calculation of risks that traffickers would need to consider. If coordinated effectively with ground operations, it might lead to some seizures and arrests. Embassy will continue to gather details on how Gendarmeria might utilize such assets.

10. (SBU) Embassy sees utility in contributing on a cost-sharing basis towards construction of a permanent home for the NBTF. Currently the task force is housed in rented property funded by INCLE.

WAYNE

=====CABLE ENDS=====